

**Heritage Hill Association Board Meeting
May 20, 2020 Minutes**

In Attendance via Teleconference: Suzanne De Haan, Kate Diedrich, Jeff Martin, Wendy VerHage Falb, Sarah Green, Wayne Norlin, Scott Opperman, James Scozzari, Michele Giordano, Amy DeMott and John Walendowski

Absent: Wes Beck

Staff: Barbara Draughon and Maria Zache Starkey

Public: None

1. Call to Order: 7:07 p.m.

ACTION ITEMS:

2. **Minutes** – Minutes of the April, 2020 meeting were approved unanimously. Motion made by Sarah G.
3. **Discussion and Motion to Approve changes to the Personnel Policy** – Wendy highlighted the fact the current policy was out-of-date with current practices and thanked Barbara D. for her work researching other policies in similar organizations. Barbara D. highlighted all changes. Changes include editing the language to reflect that the Executive Director is in charge of personnel and personnel changes; the board is still in charge of hiring and managing the Executive Director (this has been the actual practice for many years). An additional category of Hourly Employee was added, full-time employment is based on a thirty-hour work week and accrual of vacation hours is capped as well as being limited in rollover. The board members voted unanimously to accept all suggested changes.
4. **Discussion and Motion to Decide the 2020 Garden Tour** –Kate D. reported that Ottawa Hills canceled their Garden Tour recently. Kate outlined the difficulties with rescheduling Garden Tour with the restrictions of Covid safety. Kate also noted that the recurring Garden Tour sponsors are some of the businesses that have been hardest hit by the closures necessary during the stay-at-home orders. Discussion included the possibility of holding the tour in the fall; Kate noted that many gardens are in decline at that time and would not show as well. James S. made a motion to cancel the 2020 tour, Suzanne D. seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously.

INFORMATION ITEMS:

9. **Treasurer's Report:** James S. reported that HHA has been awarded a federal, Payroll Protection Plan forgivable loan which provides for 8 weeks of payroll plus other allowable expenses. Heritage Hill's Request for Funding Proposal to the city for CDBG funding was also approved. With both of these pieces of very good news, HHA has a temporary financial plan going forward. As of July 1, a new plan will be needed. Wendy F. expressed huge thanks to Maria Z. S. for seeing the PPP loan through to fruition and commented that Barbara D. had worked with Jan E. and Maria to project finances through the end of June and into the summer.
10. **Staff Reports:** Barbara D. echoed the good news about the CDBG funding for the 2020-2021 contract year and noted that over the next six weeks, the board will take a much more detailed look at the financial picture and will likely have to make some hard decisions about staffing and services between August and the next Home Tour. Short-term, the staffing levels for May and June will help fulfill both the CDBG and PPP requirements as well as paying down some accumulated vacation hours. Barbara also reiterated the board's intent to have a retreat for Strategic Planning to revisit the mission of the organization and the picture of long-term sustainability. Barbara asked members about applying for a NPTA (Non-Profit Technical Assistance which is a Grand Rapids entity) grant for monies for strategic planning, remote access for the HHA network and volunteer

management. The application is due June 12 and awards are between \$300 and \$10,000. The board approved applying and Wendy F. commented that this was a fantastic idea and reflected acute needs of the association.

10. Committee/Liaison Reports:

Land Use: Wayne N. reported that he and Craig Nobbelin have been monitoring the agendas for the various commission meetings at the city which are currently all being held virtually.

Fundraising:

Home Tour: Members engaged in a brief post-mortem about Home Tour 2020; Suzanne D. Confirmed the good news that all Hosts had agreed to be on Tour in 2021.

Pledge Drive: Barbara D. reported that the Executive Committee has been discussing a few versions of letters to go out, directed to the entire neighborhood, Home Tour Volunteers and Members who have given in the past two years. Barbara will be asking for help from select neighbors to write the letters; the one directed to neighbors will likely be included in the upcoming Herald.

Community Engagement:

Litter Clean-Up: Michele G. reported that there have not been many opportunities of late to engage neighbors due to Covid-19 but that an E-Alert had gone out that day announcing a Litter Clean-Up neighborhood-wide event for Saturday, June 30th.

Neighborhood Survey: Barbara D. announced that the results were in for a Neighborhood Survey that had gone out to all Grand Rapids organized neighborhoods. There were 71 completed surveys from Heritage Hill. Strengths commented on included walkability, neighborliness, safety, diversity, history, architecture and cleanliness. Weaknesses included lack of diversity, crime, parking and traffic safety issues, lead pipes, the need for trash receptacles and the lack of a food market.

11. **New Business:** Maria Z. S complimented Barbara D. for her executive skills as the Interim Executive Director and thanked Suzanne D. for delivering treats to everyone for the meeting.

12. **Motion to Adjourn,** Made, Seconded, Passed – 7:57 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by Maria Zache Starkey